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RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3664
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001302

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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION BELIEVES GOVERNMENT REFORMS WILL LEAD
TO MAKSIM BAKIYEV AS PRESIDENT

Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with Roza Otunbayeva, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and current leader of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) Parliamentary faction. Otunbayeva was uniformly negative (as expected) with regards to the recently announced Government reforms and the proposed changes to the Kyrgyz Constitution, and believed the ultimate motivation for the moves was to increase the President,s authority and pave the way for his son Maxim Bakiyev to ascend to the Presidency. End Summary.

12. (C) On December 15 the Ambassador discussed with Otunbayeva the state of the SDPK and the opposition in general, and her views on the recently announced Government reorganization. Otunbayeva was extremely pessimistic about the Government,s reform plans, and was particularly outraged with a draft law of Constitutional amendments submitted to Parliament earlier that day that would legalize the reforms announced by President Bakiyev in October.

13. (C) Otunbayeva stated that the Government,s position had been ill thought out and even illegal, and was hopeful that the draft law approving these policies would not be approved by Parliament. Otunbayeva stated there was no legal justification for the creation of the Presidential Institute and that the powerful, policy-making authorities of the Institute were unconstitutional. Otunbayeva also criticized the President's plans to change the Constitution and make the Presidential Institute the next in line for succession of government authority after the President (Currently the Speaker of Parliament is next in line). She said that such a move would further dilute Parliament and represented a grab for power by the Bakiyev family.

14. (C) Otunbayeva was equally negative when discussing the newly formed Central Agency for Development, Innovation and Investment, led by Maxim Bakiyev. Otunbayeva again believed the Agency was illegal and unconstitutional, and that it would swallow-up or marginalize the existing Ministries with economic responsibilities. Otunbayeva confided in the Ambassador her belief that the upcoming 11-day closure of the Government for New Year's and Orthodox Christmas was actually a cover for a planned coup d'tat.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador questioned Otunbayeva about the actual goals of the reorganization as opposed to the Government,s stated goals of producing a smaller, more efficient system. Otunbayeva opined that the reforms were a move to consolidate power in the hands of the President and to ensure a smooth transition of power to a member of the President,s family.

¶6. (C) When questioned by the Ambassador which Bakiyev family member was the likely successor, Otunbayeva initially hesitated. She then responded that until recently, both Maxim and the President,s brother, Janysh Bakiyev, were under consideration. Otunbayeva claimed, however, that Janysh was no longer the likely candidate. She explained that Janysh had pushed the President to select Daniyar Usenov as the next Prime Minister. Having gotten his wish, Otunbayeva reasoned, Janysh was no longer owed the Presidency.

¶7. (C) Otunbayeva went on to suggest that Maxim was now being groomed to take on the Presidency. As evidence, she noted that his current position put him in charge of the economy and would allow him to receive the credit were the economy to make any gains. The Ambassador asked Otunbayeva about the timing of a move to consolidate the family,s power, noting that President Bakiyev had recently been re-elected and had a full five-year term ahead of him. Otunbayeva responded that President Bakiyev was extremely ill, and did not want to delay the process of lining up his heir. Finally, when asked by the Ambassador whether the opposition had any possibility

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of disrupting the President,s plans to introduce these new amendments and thus further ensure his family,s authority, Otunbayeva again noted that the proposals were unconstitutional, but that they would certainly be approved by the Parliament at this time.

¶8. (C) Comment: Like most of the political opposition, Otunbayeva is a very frustrated person looking at most of what happens very much from the outside. We have little confidence in her information and less in her analysis. Nonetheless, this conversation provides a useful look at the current state of mind of opposition leadership.
GFOELLER